

VZCZCXYZ0001
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHDM #4365/01 2491329
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 061329Z SEP 06
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1405
RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN 6252
RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT 4087
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO 2650
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH 7274
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV 1278
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 4656
RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM 0871
RHMFIISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL//CCPA//
INFO RUEHNC/AMEMBASSY NICOSIA 7008

UNCLAS DAMASCUS 04365

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR PA, NEA/ARN, INR/IC/CD, INR/S:STHIBEAULT AND
JMCCARTER, VOA NEWS CA, NEA/PPD:CBOURGEOIS, DBENZE AND
AFERNANDEZ, IIP/G/NEA-SA RWINCHESTER
WHITE HOUSE FOR NSC
CENTCOM FOR CCPA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KMDR](#) [PREL](#) [KPAQ](#) [OPRC](#) [SY](#)

SUBJECT: Damascus Media Reaction: Syria/Lebanon, Palestinian Territories, Iraq (9/6)

¶1. Summary: Syrian papers today reported President Asad's phone call to UN Secretary General Kofi Annan following up on the situation in Lebanon, and Annan's interview with the daily newspaper Al-Hayat (Sept. 6 edition) describing Syria's cooperation with the UN regarding regional issues as "positive," and saying that there was tangible Syrian cooperation in this regard. Annan confirmed that the issue of exchanging embassies between Syria and Lebanon is a sovereign issue to be determined by the two countries. He underlined the importance of moving to achieve a comprehensive peace in the Middle East on all tracks, saying "it is the only way through which we can enjoy peace."

Papers also reported that Minister of Information Bilal participated in a symposium held by the Anglo-American Organization at the British House of Commons. Dr. Bilal stressed that Syria is working to realize a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East and to eliminate Israeli occupation from her territories through full Israeli withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories, including the Syrian Golan, to the Jun 4th 1967 borders. On UNSC Resolution 1701, Dr. Bilal said that it does not call for a cease-fire, which is a matter that raises astonishment and condemnation. He criticized the British Government's position that allowed Israel to continue its aggression against Lebanon for 33 days.

Papers also reported that Members of the Syrian Parliament staged a sit-in on Tuesday in solidarity with their Lebanese counterparts to protest the Israeli blockade of Lebanon. They sent a cable of solidarity to Lebanese parliament speaker Nabih Berri.

Papers also reported that MP Muhamad Habash, Chairman of the Islamic Studies Center in Damascus, announced on Tuesday that a popular delegation, including 50 parliamentarians, Islamic scholars and Christian clergymen, will head to Lebanon to demonstrate full solidarity with the Lebanese people. "The visit comes within the framework of the activities of the Islamic and Christian Joint Committee, which works in the field of religious brotherhood and enhances cohesion between the two brotherly countries," Dr. Habash told a SANA reporter. Dr.

Habash said that the delegation will visit areas destroyed by the brutal Israeli aggression and meet with a number of political leaders and religious and spiritual personalities.

End of summary.

12. Selected Headlines:

"President Asad discusses the situation in Lebanon by telephone with UN Secretary General Kofi Annan" (Government-owned Tishreen, 9/6)

"President Asad honors families and civil associations who hosted the brotherly Lebanese during recent aggression against Lebanon: What you offered was great and unparalleled" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 9/6)

"Minister of Information Mohsen Bilal maintains at the British House of Commons: Syria is working to realize a just and comprehensive peace; Tony Blair's government allowed Israel to destroy Lebanon" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 9/6)

"The People's Assembly stages a sit-in in solidarity with Lebanese MPs. Speaker al-Abrash tells Lebanese counterpart: We support you in order to complete reaping the fruits of victory" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 9/6)

"Hassan Nasrallah, Secretary General of Hezbollah: Israel takes Syria's power into consideration; it stayed away from the Syrian border during the latest war" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 9/6)

13. Editorial Block Quotes:

"Reconstruction Is a More Sublime Goal"

Umar Jaftali, an editorialist in government-owned Tishreen, said (9/6): "President Asad's decision to rebuild three towns in south Lebanon is yet another indication that Syria and Lebanon share everything, even the loaf of bread, despite modest material resources in relation to the magnitude of the tragedy and the destruction that the Zionist enemy caused in Lebanon....

"Syria always seeks to serve the interests of Lebanon and the Lebanese people, regardless of the campaigns by some tendentious Lebanese who are connected with suspicious schemes....

"It is true that some people continue to bombard every Syrian initiative to help Lebanon and to interpret it based on their deviant positions, but it is also true that the majority of Lebanese know the true Syrian intentions and what sacrifices Syria has made, with its blood and money, for their sake....

"What counts now is the reconstruction of Lebanon through the concerted efforts of sincere Lebanese and the sons of the Arab nation...."

"Inside Siege and Outside Siege"

Isam Dari, an editorialist in government-owned Tishreen, wrote (9/6): "Those Lebanese who plotted against the Resistance and relied on its collapse during the Israeli aggression against Lebanon are now trying to portray the Resistance's victory as a defeat....

"Those who trade in the blood of the Lebanese cannot discuss patriotism or claim they care about Lebanon and its people.... Now that the American plan has received a fatal blow at the hands of the Resistance, we today see those who are involved in this plan pulling out their knives to stab and assassinate the

Resistance, either through the call to disarm Hezbollah or through a vicious attack on the Resistance and all those who support it from other factions. They are doing this to defend the new Middle East plan because their existence is linked to the existence and implementation of this plan....

"It is surprising that while this Lebanese team is doing this, it is doing nothing to break the Israeli blockade on Lebanon.... Those who depart from the principles of the homeland and the Resistance will ultimately fail and their policy will collapse...."

"Moves That Are Insufficient to Avert Dangers"

Ahmad Dawwa, a commentator in government-owned Al-Thawra, said (9/6): "Although the region and the world in general acknowledge that the achievement of peace and the removal of occupation is the way to solve the problems of the Middle East, Israel and the Bush Administration are more interested in using the absence of peace and the continuation of the occupation to implement their chaos-based plans at the expense of the peoples of the region and the security and stability of the world....

"The United States is hindering the establishment of the Iraqi General Staff because this Iraqi body wants to determine the responsibilities for the occupation....

"Israel, for its part, uses every possible means to kill any peace opportunity. Its incursions into the Gaza Strip and its raids into the West Bank result in additional martyrs and wounded every day. Not only that: Israel's threats against

Iran are escalating, which means that it is almost impossible to translate the talk about peace into action....

"Arabs are to blame for this American and Israeli disdain for Arab existence, positions, and interests.... Arabs must adopt positions that can prevent Israel from exporting its domestic crisis, which the Lebanese Resistance's victory created, especially since the danger of the Israeli threats against Iran, if implemented, will affect the entire region, and their disastrous results will not spare the Arabs...."

"Stupid Sanctions"

Dr. Sa'id Musallam, an op-ed writer in government-owned Al-Thawra, wrote (9/6): "The policy of sanctions, which the US Administration used in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other parts of the world, and which it is now threatening to use against Iran, caused destruction, starvation, and chaos in those regions and increased the wealth and investments of the multinational companies that are led by Bush, Cheney, and Rumsfeld....

"We wonder how the United States is going to deal with Moscow and Beijing, which are now investing more than \$40 billion in Iran's oil, energy, and nuclear technology sectors....

"Regardless of how the Iranian nuclear crisis develops, the fact is that Iran is not concerned about the stupid sanctions and will not give up its sovereign rights...."

"Who Is Lying to Whom?"

Ghazi al-Dada, an op-ed writer in government-owned Tishreen, wrote (9/6): "It is surprising that President Bush continues to insist that the situation in Iraq is fine, even though the

security situation is worsening day after day and the Pentagon is warning that the country is heading toward civil war....

"If the security situation in Iraq is improving, as President Bush and other administration 'optimists' say, what is the need for sending more troops to Iraq...?"

"Who is lying to whom? Do Bush and his administration officials live in a fictitious dreamer's world that exists only in their minds and has no connection whatsoever with reality....?"

Corbin